

**ACTIVITY
REPORT
2020**



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Short introduction of CESCO


Inspired by the French initiative of Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives was established in 2009 with the mission to promote and strengthen cross-border cooperation along the Hungarian borders as well as in Central and South-East Europe.

CESCO is a private law public benefit organisation that advocates cross-border cooperation through the following activities:


 it conducts **research** in border studies and in specific border regions

 it supports the **development of projects** in the border regions

 it designs territorial integrated **strategies** and takes part in cross-border **programming**

 it supports the **development of institutions** in the border regions

 it prepares **policy materials** both on national and EU level about the developmental initiatives in the border regions, as well as it takes part in the relevant consultations and policy debates

 it helps to improve the local stakeholders' preparedness by **knowledge transfer**

CESCO's objectives

CESCO's main objectives:

- to provide technical support for cross-border initiatives along the Hungarian borders, as well as for other countries in Central and Southeast Europe;
- to improve the knowledge sharing practices between euroregions, EGTCs and the local and regional authorities taking part in cross-border cooperation;
- to disseminate the best practices from Western Europe;
- to create strategic cooperation with the relevant decision-preparing and decision-making EU authorities as well as the Northern and Western networks designed for similar purposes;
- to strengthen the cohesion, peace and mutual cooperation among the nations of Central and Southeastern Europe by nurturing mutually beneficial partnerships.

The public benefit objectives of CESCO are the following on the basis of the Act CLVI of 1997:

- activities related towards national and ethnic minorities in Hungary and Hungarians living beyond the borders,
- promoting Euro-Atlantic integration.

Our office-holders in 2020

Our honorary President is dr. Szilveszter E. Vizi, former President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The President of the Association is dr. Tamás Tóth, agricultural economist and professor of Szent István University.

Vice-presidents:

- Zoltán Szögi
CEO, Edutus University
- dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes
associate professor, head of office of the Strategic-Development Office of the Vice-rector of the National University of Public Service

Members of the association's presidency:

- dr. Jože Gričar
professor emeritus of economics (University of Maribor, Slovenia)
- Peter Kubičko
municipal and IT consultant (Slovakia)
- István Szabó
Vice President, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Assembly

Members of the Supervisory Board:

- Kálmán Nagy (President)
former Vice President of Zala County Assembly
- István Oláh
CEO of D-Tag Analytics PLC.
- dr. Attila Tilki
Member of Parliament, member of the Hungarian delegation of the Council of Europe

Members

Our association has 52 members, most of them are local or regional level municipalities located in Hungarian border regions. Moreover, professional organisations, EGTCs and individuals participate in the activities of CESCO. In 2020, none of the members has quit; two individuals, Gabriella Nagy and Zoltán Szögi became new members.



Member institutions of our organization

○ Local municipality

● Association

▨ County council

- 1 Győr-Moson-Sopron county
- 2 Komárom-Esztergom county
- 3 Nógrád county
- 4 Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county
- 5 Békés county
- 6 Bács-Kiskun county
- 7 Baranya county
- 8 Zala county
- 9 Vas county

EGTCs / Euroregion

- ▨ Rába-Danube-Váh EGTC
- ▨ Arrabona EGTC
- ▨ Pons-Danubii EGTC
- ▨ Ister-Granum EGTC
- ▨ Slaná-Rimavá Euroregion
- ▨ Slaná-Rimavá EGTC
- ▨ Gate to Europe EGTC
- ▨ Banat-Triplex Confinium EGTC
- ▨ Pannon EGTC
- ▨ Mura Region EGTC



Čenkovce
ZDRUŽENIE PRE
DEMOKRATICKÚ A
OTVORENÚ SPOLOČNOSŤ

GYŐR

TATABÁNYA

MÓRAHALOM

REGIONAL
SCIENCE
ASSOCIATION
Subotica

PÜSPÖKLADÁNY

PÁLFI ISTVÁN
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION
Berettyóújfalú

NYÍRADONY

MÁTÉSZALKA

FEHÉRGYARMAT

Snippets from the life of our association

Mosaics from the life of the association

In 2020 due to the pandemic, it was decided to postpone our general assembly which then was finally held online on September 14. At the general assembly, the participating members accepted the annual reports of the association, the Board and the Supervisory Board; the work and budget plans for 2020; as well as accepted the application of two new members and the leave of one member. The general assembly agreed for the association to join the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance.

Our plans for 2020 included a series of visits by the Secretary-General aimed at building membership relationships, but it was only possible in case of Bács-Kiskun (February 20) and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (February 24) Regional municipalities due to the epidemiological situation.

For the year of 2020, we originally planned a member study trip to the Austrian-German border region which we started to plan, but the epidemiological situation made it impossible to implement, so we were forced to postpone it.

In line with the general assembly meeting postponed due to the epidemiological situation, the Supervisory Board held its first meeting on September 2, then held its kick-off meeting, following the re-election of its members, on November 26. At the former occasion, they commented on the proposals to the general assembly, checked the portfolio of contracts from the second part of 2019 and the implementation of the 2019 decisions by the Board, the General Assembly and the Supervisory Board; at the latter one, the new president of the Supervisory Board was elected, as well as the distribution of responsibilities between members and the work plan and rules of procedure of 2021 were approved.

In 2020, we published our newsletter on a quarterly basis (March, June, October, December) in Hungarian and in English, as well as our newsletter addressing our members in Hungarian. In addition, we regularly published news on the Futurium portal of the European Union, and in the La Frontera magazine of the Association for Borderlands Studies and, in 2020, we put a lot of effort into to the modernisation of our online appearance.

Social responsibility

Even though the organisation completes tasks with public benefit, in the fields determined in its Statutes, we have also strengthened our social responsibility in different directions since 2019.

As the epidemiological situation allowed, we continued the tutoring we started last year for primary school children in the House of Inclusion Temporary Home of Families in Zugló (Befogadás Háza Zuglói Családok Átmeneti Otthona) operated by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in the 14th district of Budapest. During this difficult period, we several times organised the donation of food and cleaning appliances to the residents of the temporary home of the families operated in the same town district by the Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and its Institutions (Budapesti Módszertani Szociális Központ és Intézményei (BMSZKI)), and we also helped to procure the necessary furniture to the social spaces of the home.

Our association has been concerned about the fate of the social and rural development initiatives taking place in Cserehát for several years, and we continuously support the local economic development activities of the Cserehát region in a targeted manner, which is permanently lagging behind (in the border area). To this end, we provided community organisation, project development and territorial planning support during 2020 (partly through the employment of a local lawyer).

Within the work organisation, we continued to green our processes, further developed our waste management, and set up bicycle docks in the basement of our office as well (we made half of them available to the residents too).

The team of CESCO in 2020

Melinda BENCZI
strategic planner, project manager, political scientist

László DARÁNYI
junior strategic planner, economist

Kitti DUBNICZKI
chief planner, landscape architect

Éva GANGL
chief GIS expert, geographer

Teodor GYELNÍK
senior research fellow, political scientist

Roland HESZ
chief analyst, geographer

Enikő HÜSE-NYERGES
project manager and strategic planner, economist

Dr. Norbert JANKAI
senior legal adviser, lawyer

Viktória JÁNOSI
GIS expert, geographer

Mátyás JASCHITZ
director, geographer

Olivér KRISKA
junior GIS expert, geographer

Zsombor NAGY
junior strategic planner, economist

Gyula OCSKAY
secretary general, political philosopher, economist

Éva ROMÁN
administrative assistant

Annamária VAS
office manager, economist, human resources manager

János VERES
lawyer, coordinator of CESCO's development activities in Cserehát region

Our work was supported by 4 volunteers and 3 scholarship holders during the year.

We continually strengthen the professionalism of the work organisation. Last year we supported the doctoral studies and the consultancy studies of three co-workers (Melinda Benczi, Annamária Vas and Gyula Ocskay). In addition, we support the improvement of language skills of team members.

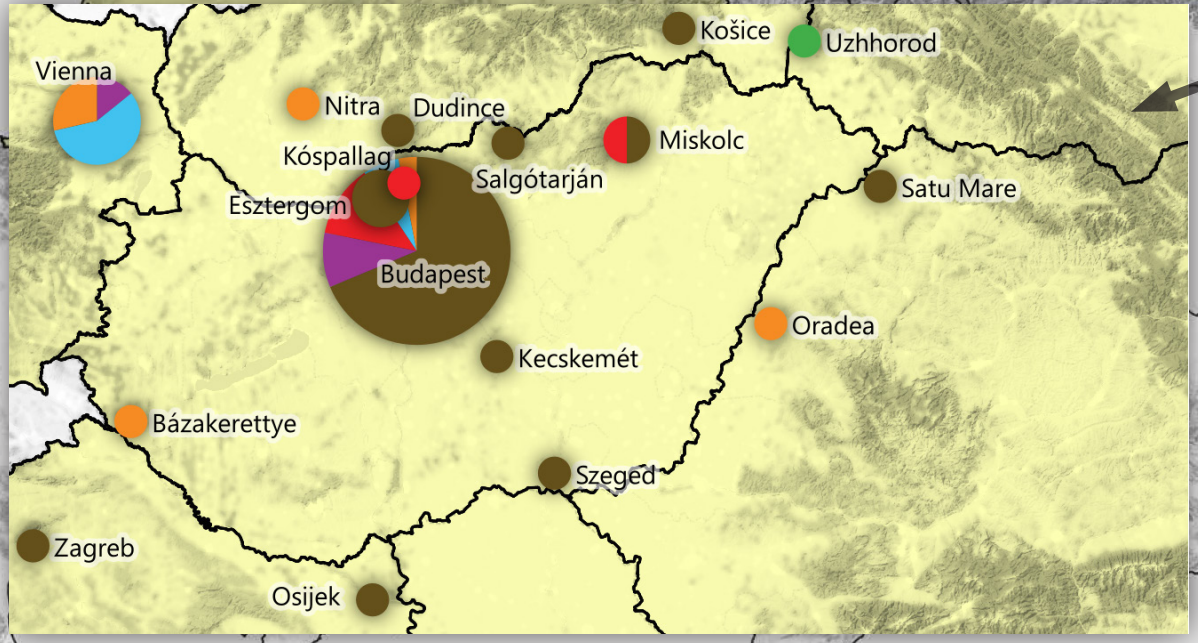
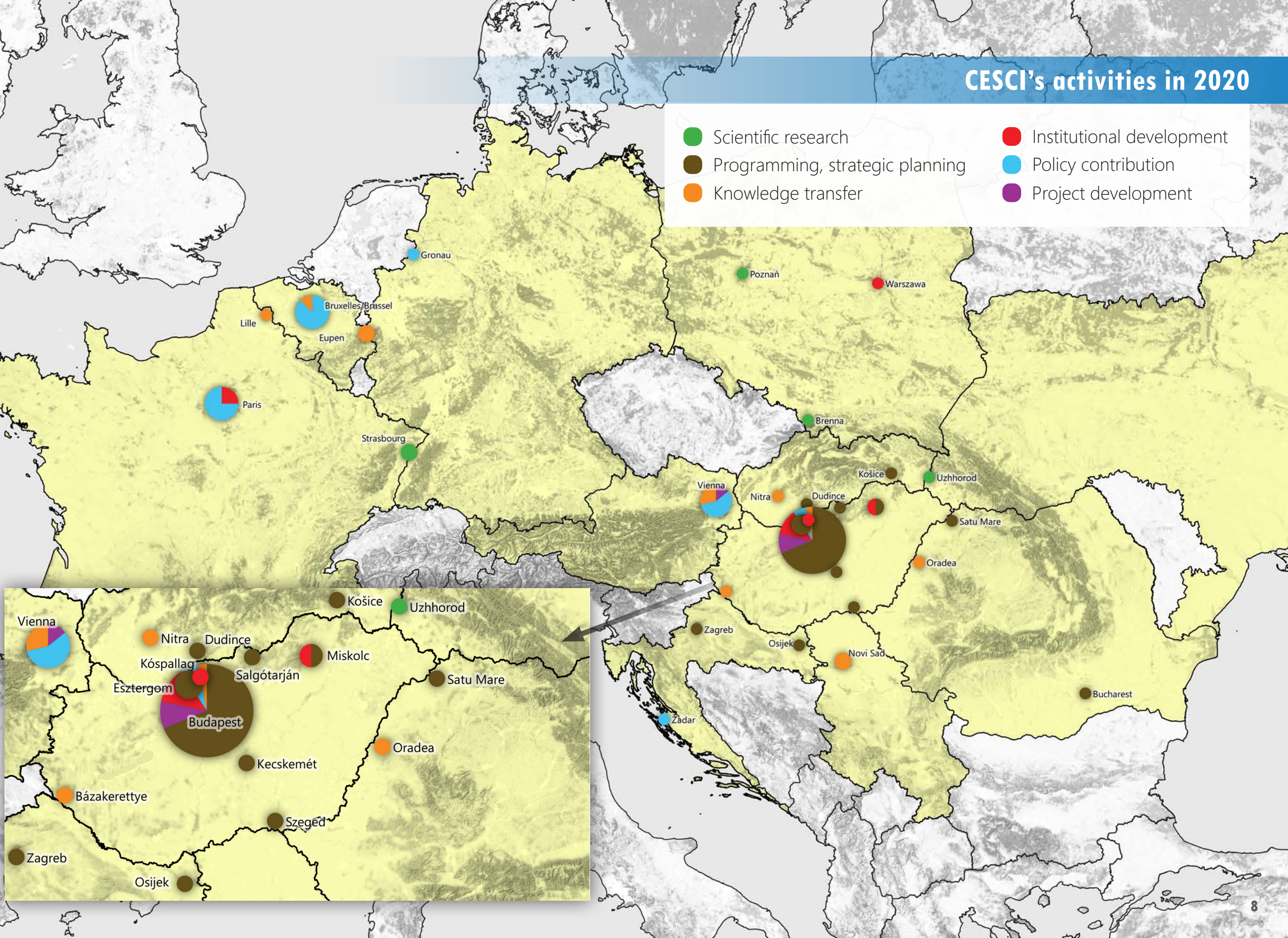
Improve the efficiency of our internal processes is one of our permanent objectives. In these terms, we re-tuned the management mechanisms of the working organ in 2020, adjusted the job descriptions of our colleagues, and created an outsourcing policy, an administration protocol, and new Word and PowerPoint templates.

We tried to increase the international visibility of our work in several ways. We also used external services in order to modernise our website and newsletter platform. These developments were completed at the beginning of 2021. We published our activity report during autumn.

In 2020, we organised a 'CESCO Light' night only once due to the epidemiological situation, with the goal of broadening the horizon of our colleagues. At this event Kitti Dubniczki and Melinda Benczi talked about their experiences in Vietnam with a high quality professionalism on social science. These events are open for our members as well.

CESCI's activities in 2020

- Scientific research
- Programming, strategic planning
- Knowledge transfer
- Institutional development
- Policy contribution
- Project development



BORDER RESEARCH, SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

Since the beginning, our association has been actively participating in conducting research along the borders and has been aspiring to strengthen the scientific grounds of its professional activities. Consequently, we take part in scientific conferences, workshops and we ourselves organise such events as well. Furthermore, we enter the international scientific discussion with our own publications. Finally, we gladly join to the work of the emerging research teams in the field of border studies. In 2020, we started cooperation negotiations with the University of Public Service about a research team on border studies to be set up within the framework of the university, in cooperation with CESCO, but the results of this process are not tangible yet, since the consultations stopped due to the epidemiological situation.

Scientific events

During 2020, the pandemic allowed us to organise and participate only at online events, but our co-workers took part in several of these events.

Strategic cooperation agreement with the Institute of Economic and Legal Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the Faculty of Law of the Uzhhorod National University, during a two-day-long conference

On February 10-11, the National University of Uzhhorod hosted a scientific meeting and ceremony, during which the representatives of the Institute of Economic and Legal Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Faculty of Law of the Uzhhorod National University and the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) signed a cooperation agreement. The parties recorded in the memorandum to start strategic cooperation aimed at facilitating cross-border cooperation at Ukraine's western borders.



In order to coordinate the professional assistance, the three partners signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, which sets out a framework for joint work in the future. The signing ceremony was attended by Andrii Guk, Head of the Ukrainian Office of the Council of Europe, József Buhajla, Consul General of Hungary in Uzhhorod, and Myroslava Oleksandrivna Lendel, Deputy Rector for Academic Policy and Research at the National University of Uzhhorod. The ceremony was followed by a scientific seminar called 'Developing cross-border cooperation in Ukraine in the light of European integration: status, challenges, prospects'. At the seminar, experts from the academic sphere and the managers of the Tisza EGTC outlined the potential role of cross-border cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine.

Based on the signed cooperation agreement, the parties identified the geographical scale of their joint activities (the area of the Tisza EGTC; the Eastern Partnership and the Visegrád countries; and the European stage, namely at EU and Council of Europe level) and topics (scientific research, education, legislation and the day-to-day practice of cross-border co-operation), in which cooperation started already in 2020. Experts from the three institutions took part in preparing a guide of cross-border cooperation published by the Council of Europe delegation in Kyiv and with the help of a successful application submitted to the International Visegrád Fund, they began to develop a legal and capacity-building framework for border regions in Ukraine, involving Polish, Czech and Slovak partners.

Further scientific events where we participated

Date	Location	Event
2020.05.21.	Poznań (online)	The world in the age of pandemic and post-pandemic period
2020.06.3-5.	online	A conference of the Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS) called 'Borders in the time of COVID-19'
2020.09.23.	Brenna (online)	A conference called 'Territorial and Inter-Organisational Cooperation 2020'
2020.11.17.	Budapest (online)	Video presentation at the Corvinus University of Budapest
2020.12.01.	Budapest (online)	Presentation at the Scientific Department of the Eötvös Loránd University

Participation in scientific projects

The association participated in the implementation of one scientific project in 2020.

Frontem (Moving borders: models for the EU?)

The Frontem project covers the Jean Monnet network cooperation supported by the Erasmus+ programme and coordinated by the University of Strasbourg (professor Birte Wassenberg), which examines border management practices and citizens' ways of perceiving borders in five border regions, in partnership with the Victoria University of Canada. CESCO also joined this initiative, launched in 2019, and regularly participated in the relevant workshops during 2020, as well as in the development of the methodology for the tool-kit to be created as a result of the project.

During the year, we also participated in the design of another Jean Monnet network project, this time under the direction of the University of Victoria, which also received support, but its implementation will begin in 2021.

The events regarding the implementation of the scientific project

Date	Location	Event
2020.05.04.	Strasbourg (online)	The kick-off meeting of the Frontem project
2020.06.26.	Strasbourg (online)	The workshop targeting the development of tools regarding the Frontem project
2020.10.16.	Strasbourg (online)	Partner meeting about the Frontem project

Scientific publications

The team members of the working organ engaged in extended scientific activities in 2020 and several works of CESCO were published.

Cross-Border Review 2020

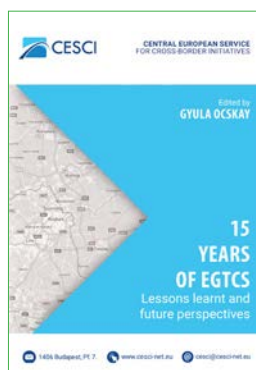
The yearbook of the association is published on an annual basis and is compiled by well-known, international authors and contains publications from all over the world. In the volume of 2020, whose editor-in-chief was James W. Scott (Karelian Institute), the writings of several noted authors, such as Martin Barthel, Alicja Fajfer, Hannah Heyenn, Marnix Mohrmann, Hayley Trowbridge, Roberto Rodolfo, Georg Uebel, Joni Virkkunen, Michael Willoughby, Jussi Laine and Anna Casaglia can be found. The authors touch upon popular topics of border studies, such as borderscapes, border safety, migration and borders, and dialogue-based cooperation along the border. The publication also includes a review of Frank Furedi's latest book called *Why Borders Matter*, and a research report on the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the borders.



We would like to develop the yearbook into a journal with an international reputation, and for this purpose, with the help of the editor in chief, we prepared a proposal for a global publisher.

15 years of the EGTCs. Lessons learnt and future perspectives

With the support of the Ministry of Justice, within the framework of the Legal accessibility project of 2020, the lessons learnt and the future perspectives of the use of the EU legal instrument turning 15 years in 2021 were summarised by leading European experts of the topic (Marcin Krzymuski, James W. Scott, Sara Svensson, Frédéric Durand, Antoine Decoville, Eduardo Medeiros, Peter Ulrich, Alice Engl, Jean Peyrony, Estelle Evrard). The volume, the foreword of which was written by dr. Judit Varga, Minister of Justice, was recommended to the readers by Judit Varga and Martín Guillermo Ramírez, Secretary-General of the AEFR, at the Borders Forum, organised by the MOT on November 9-10.



Publications of the CESCO team members (2020)

Gyelnik, T. (2020a): Carpathian Euroregion. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 159-163.

Gyelnik, T. (2020b): EuRegion West/Nyugat Pannonia. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 319-320.

Gyelnik, T. (2020c): Euroregion Danube-Kriş-Mureş-Tisa (DKMT). In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 406-407.

Gyelnik, T. (2020d): Novohrad-Nógrad. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 628-629.

Gyelnik, T. (2020e): Why Borders Matter: Why Humanity Must Relearn the Art of Drawing Boundaries. [Book review: *Why Borders Matter: Why Humanity Must Relearn the Art of Drawing Boundaries* by Furedi, F. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York.] In: Scott, W. J. (ed.): *Cross-Border Review. Yearbook 2020*. European Institute of Cross-Border Studies, CESCO, Budapest, pp. 143-148.

Gyelnik, T. – Jaschitz, M. (2020): Banat-Triplex Confinium (BTC). In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 97-98. Gyelnik, T. – Ocskay, Gy. (2020): System error. Reflections on the permanent failure of territoriality of the European Cohesion Policy. *Europa XXI*, 39, <https://doi.org/10.7163/Eu21.2020.39.7>

Hesz, R. (2020a): Arrabona. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 69-70.

Hesz, R. (2020b): Euroregion Sajó-Rima/Slaná-Rimava. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 447-448.

Hesz, R. (2020c): Mura Region. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 610-611.

Hesz, R. (2020d): Pons Danubii. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 660-661.

Hüse-Nyerges, E. – Gangl, É. (2020): A mentés határon átnyúló integrációjában rejlő potenciálok Magyarországon. *Tér és Társadalom*, 34(2), pp. 129-150.

Jankai, N. – Ocskay, Gy. (2020): II. chapter. Az európai területi társulások európai jogi keretei. In: Jankai, N., Fetyko, J.I., Jacenko, Sz.Sz., Lazur, J.V., Ocskay, Gy., Sanchenko, A.J. & Ustymenko, V.A. (eds.): *Ukraina európai területi társulásokban való részvételének intézményi és jogi dimenziója. Tiszta Korlátolt Felelősségű Európai Területi Társulás*. Ungvár, pp. 13-71.

Jaschitz, M. (2020a): Rába-Danube-Váh. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 668-670.

Jaschitz, M. (2020b): Via Carpatia. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 813-814.

Jaschitz, M. (2020c): The role of the EGTC in cross-border spatial planning. In: Ocskay, Gy. (ed.): *15 years of the EGTCs. Lessons learnt and future perspectives*. CESCO, Budapest, pp. 123-144.

Jevcsak, J.B. – Zardi, A. – Lazur, J.V. – Ocskay, Gy. – Sanchenko, A.E., – Soshnikov, A.O. – Ustymenko, V.A. – Fetyko, J. I. (2020): *Transcordonne pyvrobotnitstvo: pravovy osnovi ta uspishni praktiki*. Posybnik. (eds.): Huk, A. K. & Sanchenko, A. E. Rada Evropi (Council of Europe), Kyiv.

Medeiros, E. – Ramirez, M. G. – Ocskay, Gy. – Peyrony, J. (2020): Covidfencing effects on cross-border deterritorialism: the case of Europe. *European Planning Studies*, DOI:10.1080/09654313.2020.1818185

Ocskay, Gy. (2020a): Changing interpretation of the EGTC tool. In: Ocskay, Gy. (ed.): *15 years of the EGTCs. Lessons learnt and future perspectives*. CESCO, Budapest, pp. 37-62

Ocskay, Gy. (2020b): Cross-border territorial impact assessment. In: Medeiros, E. (ed.): *Territorial Impact Assessment*. Springer. Basel, pp. 123-142.

Ocskay, Gy. (2020c): Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI). In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 164-166.

Ocskay, Gy. (2020d): Euroregion Ipeľ-Ipoly. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 418-419.

Ocskay, Gy. (2020e): Ister-Granum. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 564-565.

Ocskay, Gy. (2020f): Tisza. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 767-769.

CROSS-BORDER PLANNING

Since its foundation CESCO realises extended planning activities and uses the results thereof during the preparation of European Union programmes. Comparing to the previous planning portfolios, our work was even more diversified in 2020.

Tasks related to planning

Regarding the planning period of 2021-2027, the plans to be reviewed was also commented on by our team, with special emphasis on the aspects of borderlands.

During the year, we continuously developed and updated our GIS and territorial statistical databases, and also expanded our knowledge of planning methods. In order to better meet the growing needs for GIS analysis, we implemented significant and targeted IT improvements in 2020 in order to modernise and expand our relevant capacities. We replaced the old (decades-old in some cases) elements of our hardware park with upgraded instruments, and we bought GIS and graphics software.

We regularly assisted the preparation of programming documents of different levels, for example the strategy that targets the complex development of the Economic Development Zone of North-West Hungary, from cross-border aspects; the planning targeting the integrated development of the Hungarian-Slovenian border region; and the preparation of the development activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the Carpathian Basin.

Preparation of plans on settlement level

Development concepts of middle-sized towns

At the invitation of Hétfa Research Institute, at the end of the previous year, we joined the elaboration/updating of the development concept of two Hungarian towns along the border, namely Sátoraljaújhely and Esztergom, and the activities were completed at the beginning of 2020. We also participated in the work of a workshop developing the methodology of a planned programme dedicated to the development of Hungarian middle-sized towns.

In case of Esztergom, we also examined the possibility of awarding the town with a county-right status.

In the autumn of 2020, we received a request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to analyse the situational energies and the existing development ideas of Pápa according to the methodology applied in case of cross-border towns, and then to propose a revision of its development concept. Strengthening of Pápa as an attractive middle-sized town became a concept guideline following consultations led at local level, field work and statistical, GIS and document analysis. The material includes a comprehensive state-of-play analysis covering the geographic conditions, infrastructure and logistics of the town, and we also prioritised three key areas as development opportunities: labour market, place of residence and tourism. The elements of the development concept were also built around these themes, through the expansion and systematisation of project ideas received from the local level.



Development concepts of cities beyond borders with significant Hungarian minority

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we have elaborated development concepts to be implemented with Hungarian support in cross-border cities having significant Hungarian communities living there. The elaboration of the concepts started in 2017 and the amendments and updates of the given drafts became part of our daily tasks. In 2020, the concept of Târgu-Mureș in Romania, which had already begun in the previous year, had to be completed first, then it had to be fundamentally reshaped and updated based on the renewed local aspects.

We also started the drafting of the situational analysis of Oradea, located also in Romania. In this case, the higher (i.e. ministerial) -level negotiations, which are beyond our control, did not reach a phase where the concept development could begin. So in the end, we only made an in-depth situation analysis and a short concept outline.



Plans on regional level

Updating of the development strategy of the Rába-Danube-Váh EGTC

Our association was commissioned by the Rába-Danube-Váh EGTC to update the development strategy elaborated by CESCO in 2014-2015, before the new budget cycle of the EU started. Most of this work was carried out in 2019, but the incorporation of the remarks of the EGTC members and the finalisation of the material took place in 2020.



Elaboration of the territorial development and institutional development strategies of the Via Carpatia EGTC

Our association has been commissioned to develop the territorial development and institutional development strategies of the Via Carpatia EGTC, which we completed with the active involvement of the relevant actors. The aim of the former document was to harmonise the territorial development ideas and activities of the two member regions and to define the scope of possible joint developments, while the latter strategy examined the direction in which the EGTC could be further developed.



Drávaszög Development Programme – Situation Analysis and Strategy

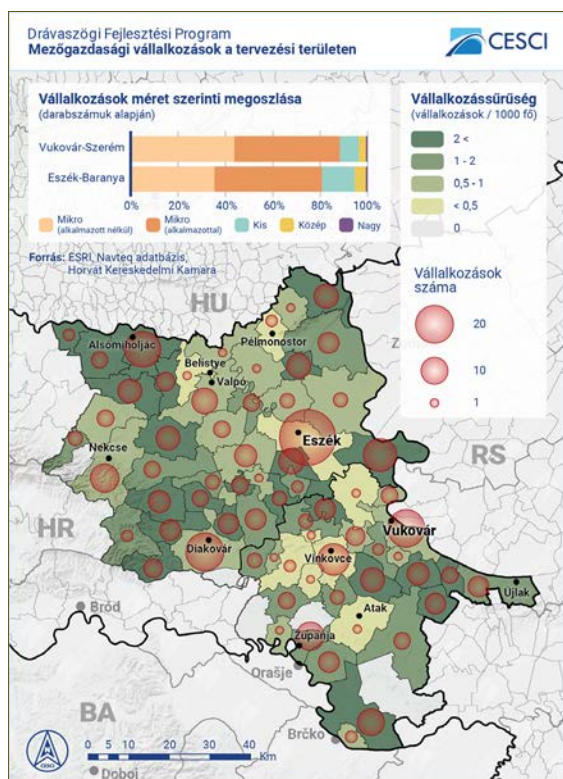
On behalf of the Economica Hungarica Foundation, our planning tasks for 2020 included the elaboration of the Drávaszög (Baranjska lesna zaravan) regional development programme in Croatia. A substantial amount of the planning work (fieldwork, statistical and GIS analysis, document analysis, concept proposal) was carried out during the year, but partly due to the epidemiological situation, the completion of the public consultation phase was postponed to 2021.

Lučenec-Filakovo-Salgótarján axis

Also on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, planning work began as a development concept for the Filakovo-Salgótarján city pair, which became regionally significant on a local initiative by including Lučenec and its surroundings and the relevant demand for the joint development of major transport infrastructure connecting the affected areas of the two countries in the planning process. The outline consulted with the city councils was submitted by the end of the autumn.

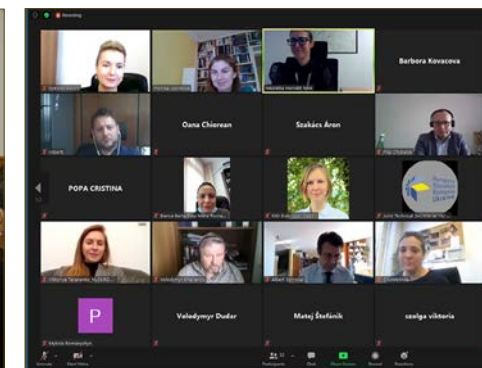
Project targeting the valorisation of water-related cultural heritage of the Ister-Granum EGTC

With the support of the INTERREG EUROPE programme, together with 6 partners Ister-Granum EGTC, implements the project that prepares developments for the utilisation of water-related cultural heritage, based on an ecosystem protection methodology. As the first activity of project 'WAVE', every partner had to draft a status quo analysis for which CESCO was subcontracted. We completed the analysis by April after the evaluation of the experts of the project, then we presented the document at an online meeting.



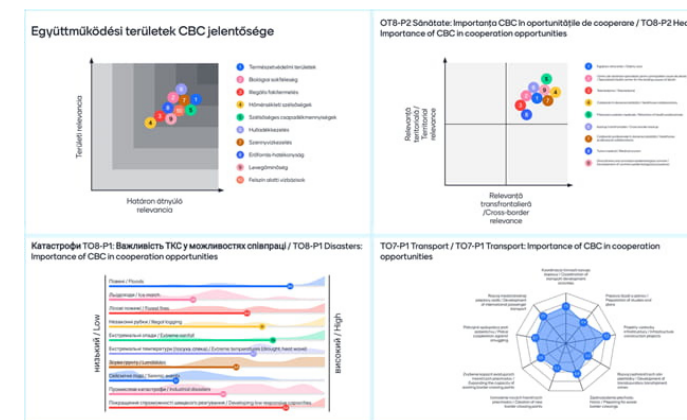
Territorial analyses of cross-border programmes 2021-2027

In the previous year, we started the preparation of three cross-border programmes (Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG, Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA CBC, and the NEXT neighbourhood programme including four countries) as public benefit service, but the majority of the related tasks were realised in 2020. In all three cases, our duty was to elaborate the territorial analysis (regional analysis) that underlines the programme strategy: collection, analysis and geoinformatically processing of statistical data; organisation of workshops with the involvement of local and regional stakeholders; conducting extended surveys.



In case of the Hungarian-Slovak program, we organised six sectoral webinars, the main conclusions of which were incorporated into the final analysis. The inclusion of the comments on the territorial analysis was carried out and the task was finished in September.

In case of the Hungarian-Serbian programme, the participants needed to significantly clarify and deepen the first-round territorial analysis, including a new survey; new regional and sectoral workshops (4) were organised and evaluated, in parallel with the deepening of the territorial analysis. After processing and handling the received comments and making the necessary amendments, the document was successfully finalised in October.



Tasks related to programming

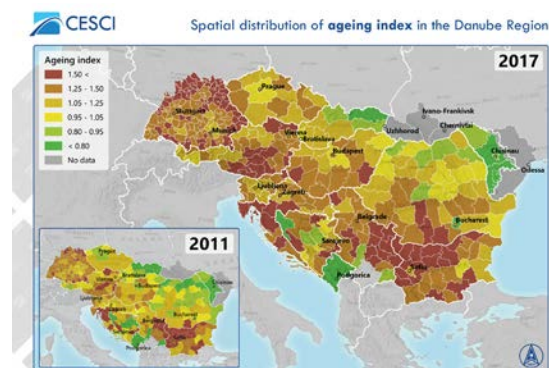
First phase evaluation of cross-border programmes

During 2018-2019, the association carried out the 'first phase' evaluation of four CBC programmes concerning Hungary. The completion of one of these works (the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI Programme) has not been possible in the above period (due to external reasons because of the delayed operation of the programme), therefore, some tasks and their final phase have been postponed to 2020. In the framework of the activity, a mid-term evaluation of the programme was carried out according to the EU nomenclature – in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and impact. The evaluation has been completed and it was accepted by the concerned stakeholders.



The Territorial Strategy of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP2)

During 2019, the association drafted the Territorial Analysis of the next Danube Transnational Programme (DTP2) of 2021-2027, which provides evidence for the programming process of 2020. As a continuation of this work, we prepared the DTP2 Territorial Strategy as a public benefit service in 2020, which, given the identified challenges, considers the territorial relevance of each thematic area, relevant actors' opinions and ideas regarding the next programme and the regulatory/policy framework of the planning process. Later, the Territorial Strategy was a basis for the programme template.



Evaluation of the Central Europe Transnational Programme

At the invitation of Urbasofia company, we participated in a tender for the evaluation of the Central European Transnational Programme as a consortium member, but we did not win the tender.

Incorporating cross-border aspects into the (national) operational programmes

In consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we also made efforts throughout the year to develop the methodology of a domestic border town programme, in addition to the attempts made to shape relevant policies. In the end, this methodology unfortunately did not become a part of the new territorial operational programme (TSDOP Plus). However, the Ministry delegated Mátyás Jaschitz, Director of CESCO, to the Monitoring Committee of the Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme (TSDOP), and Gyula Ocskay received an invitation from the Komárom-Esztergom regional municipality to the CBC working group preparing the next territorial operational programme. Through these fora, we continue to bring the border issue into the forefront of programming and implementation.

Planning and programming related events

Date	Location	Event
2020.01.29.	Budapest	Professional workshop of the small and medium town development methodology
2020.02.04.	Esztergom	The first workshop of the local support group of the WAVE project
2020.02.25.	Budapest	Working group meeting of the Danube Transnational Programme
2020.03.04.	Esztergom	The second workshop of the local support group of the WAVE project
2020.03.05.	Szeged	Programming workshop of the Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA CBC programme
2020.03.09.	Budapest	The first sectoral workshop of the next Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG programme
2020.03.11.	Budapest	The second sectoral workshop of the Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG programme
2020.03.11.	Budapest	The third sectoral workshop of the Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG programme
2020.03.12.	Kecskemét	Programming workshop of the Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA CBC programme
2020.03.31.-04.01.	Aarhus (online)	Presenting the status quo analysis of the Ister-Granum EGTC at the online meeting of the WAVE project

Date	Location	Event
2020.04.27.	Budapest (online)	Hungarian-Slovak planning workshop in the topic of 'heritage management'
2020.04.28.	Budapest (online)	Hungarian-Slovak planning workshop in the topic of 'social challenges'
2020.04.30.	Budapest (online)	Hungarian-Slovak planning workshop in the topic of 'economic developments'
2020.05.28.	Esztergom (online)	The third workshop of the local support group of the WAVE project, the presentation of the finalised status quo analysis
2020.06.04.	Budapest	Consultation about the Drávaszög Development Strategy
2020.07.02.	Budapest	Consultation with the city council of Esztergom
2020.07.07.	Vienna (online)	Online professional workshop within the framework of the Central Europe Transnational Programme
2020.07.15.	Košice	Via Carpatia, planning workshop
2020.07.20-21.	Budapest	The 4th meeting of the Task Force of the Danube Transnational Programme
2020.07.28.	Bucharest (online)	Kick-off workshop of the Romania-Hungary INTERREG CBC programme
2020.07.29.	Osijek	Drávaszög field work
2020.08.04.	Dudince	Meeting of the Hungary-Slovakia INTERREG CBC Programming Committee
2020.09.10.	Budapest (online)	Thematic workshop of the Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme
2020.09.17.	Budapest (online)	Programming Committee meeting of the Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme
2020.09.29.	Salgótarján	Consultation about the joint urban development concept of Salgótarján and Fiľakovo
2020.09.29.	Budapest	Consultation about the urban development concept of Pápa
2020.10.21.	Budapest	Online workshop with the Hétfá Research Institute evaluating the Territorial Operational Programme
2020.10.22.	Budapest (online)	Demonstrating the Territorial Strategy of the Danube Transnational Programme at the Annual Forum of the Danube Strategy
2020.11.03.	Budapest (online)	The 5th meeting of the Task Force of the Danube Transnational Programme
2020.11.04.	Budapest (online)	Meeting of the Task Force of the Danube Transnational Programme together with the national coordinators of the Danube Strategy
2020.11.16.	Budapest (online)	Webinar of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC programme - with Hungarian participants
2020.11.19.	Budapest (online)	Online webinar of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC programme - with Romanian participants
2020.11.19.	Budapest (online)	Online webinar of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC programme - with Ukrainian participants
2020.11.20.	Budapest (online)	Online webinar of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC programme - with Slovak participants
2020.11.25.	Miskolc	Presentation of the territorial development strategy of the Via Carpatia EGTC
2020.12.10.	Satu Mare	Consultation on the urban development concept of Satu Mare
2020.12.16.	Budapest (online)	Meeting of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC Programming Committee

CROSS-BORDER PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Since the beginning, we have been supporting the preparation and development of cross-border projects, so that scientifically valid, cross-border integrated strategies would be implemented. In 2020, this activity included the professional support of a new tool, called cross-border territorial action plans for employment.

Project development activity

Territorial action plans for employment (TAPE) on the Hungarian-Slovak border

The Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG V-A programme applies several innovative solutions, partially thanks to the programming carried out with the help of CESCO. Consequently, in a unique way, two European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) manage the small project fund. The Hungarian based Ister-Granum EGTC takes part in the infrastructural project as a Slovak partner, and the representative of the EGTCs can participate with observer status at the meetings of the Monitoring Committee.

Within the action plans (TAPes), the programme provides support for the development of employment of some areas in order to strengthen cross-border labour mobility and to develop the border regions economically and socially lagging behind. For the sake of successful implementation, our association provided continuous technical assistance to the Joint Secretariat and the applicants. In 2020, this meant the monitoring of certain TAPE projects and making professional interventions if necessary. Many EGTCs have submitted action plans and won significant amounts of funding. We also offered publicity by introducing the TAPes coordinated by the Pons Danubii EGTC and the Via Carpatia EGTC in our newsletter. We participated in the opening event of the latter action plan in Gagyvendégi. In case of the action plan aiming to prepare the new development axis connecting the motorways M3 in Hungary and R2 in Slovakia, we managed to solve a challenge by changing a partner.

Aftercare of projects within the Hungarian-Slovak INTERREG programme

In relation to the Hungarian-Slovak programme's call published in 2019, we prepared successful proposals for the Arrabona EGTC and the Ipoly Valley EGTC, in connection with which we performed follow-up tasks during 2020.

Project development related to CESCO's professional program

Apart from the projects prepared for external parties, CESCO develops projects also for the implementation of its own professional program. In 2020, our V4+ proposal was successful in this field, and we participated at the kick-off event of the Heal Now project targeting cooperation between Austrian and Hungarian hospitals that was successfully submitted last year.

In addition to the above, we participated in the design of the project documents to be submitted to the Hungarian Tourism Agency by the Municipality of Esztergom, the objective of which is the renovation of the monumental spa complex in the city centre.

Project development related events

Date	Location	Event
2020.07.15.	Budapest	Presentation on the synergies of the SECCo2 and the Power4BIO projects
2020.07.23.	Gagyvendégi	The kick-off groundbreaking ceremony of the Beautiful Cserehát action plan
2020.09.18.	Budapest	Power4Bio Project workshop, presentation of the SECCo2 project
2020.09.23.	Nitra (online)	Presentation of the Secco platform within the framework of the POWER4BIO project
2020.11.30.	Vienna (online)	Participation in the kick-off conference of the 'Heal Now' project



The kick-off groundbreaking ceremony of the Beautiful Cserehát action plan



CROSS-BORDER INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The sustainability of the results of the cross-border developments can be ensured if there is some kind of institutional guarantee. Therefore, beside the planning and project development work, CESCO is actively involved in shaping cross-border institutional cooperation too, which primarily means professional assistance for the foundation and operation of EGTCs.

Support for the foundation of EGTC

Support for the establishment of the Euro-Contrôle Route (ECR) EGTC

CESCO was commissioned back in 2015 by the Brussels based ECR network to provide professional support for the establishment of a network EGTC. Over the last years, the process progressed quite slowly, since 14 member states' transport authorities showed interest in the cooperation, therefore the founding documents of the Dutch based association had to be adjusted to 14 countries' legislation.

We continued to assist the process also in 2020 with our technical advice on institutional development, but the partnership is still not registered. As a result of Brexit, the British authority had to leave the network, which led to the withdrawal of several other members. Throughout the year, we were in touch with the management of the network and we answered in online form the questions of legal nature arising from time to time. We made serious but unsuccessful efforts to keep the Hungarian authority in the preparatory Task Force of the EGTC.

EGTC program

Since the establishment of CESCO in 2009, it has played an important role in the establishment and professional support of EGTCs with Hungarian participation, and in the development of relevant national and EU level policies. These diverse activities remained continuous in 2020 as well. The work generally supporting the Hungarian EGTCs was carried out in close cooperation with the competent department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the necessary activities were coordinated at regular joint consultations also in 2020.

EGTC workshops

In 2012, CESCO launched the EGTC workshop as a forum of networking and exchanging of experiences. It is held 3-4 times a year and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade took over its organisation in 2018. Even though, organising and financing the workshop is not CESCO's duty anymore, we are still actively involved in the preparation of the workshops and we help the work with professional lectures and consultation.

In 2020, two workshops were held: in Budapest (June 8) and in Kóspallag (July 30-31). One of the important topics of the first meeting was the ongoing planning of the EU financial period of 2021-2027, which was touched upon in several presentations, while the Secretary-General of CESCO, Gyula Ocskay talked about how COVID-19 impacted the lives of people living in the border regions. At the second meeting, besides evaluating the conclusions of the 2014-2020 programming period relevant to the EGTCs, the organisers also provided presentations on current news for the 2021-2027 period. The process of the thematic preparation of the INTERREG programmes was presented by Mátyás Jaschitz, director of CESCO.

Individual support for EGTCs

In 2020, we provided general legal and professional support for Hungarian EGTCs. Many Hungarian EGTCs raised the question, how the general assemblies could be held during the pandemic. We informed the concerned EGTCs about the applicable legislation in each case and we also gave a detailed description in order to properly implement the meetings. At the request of the Mura Region EGTC, the statutes and convention of the grouping were amended after consultations. In 2021, another amendment task is expected to manage the remarks of the members. The constitutional documents of the Ipoly Valley EGTC were also modified in 2020. Unfortunately, personal consultation was postponed due to the epidemiological situation, but after we received the aspects of change, the preparation of the amendments began and was completed in 2021. The Arrabona EGTC came up with the idea to relaunch the Győr-Dunajská Streda bus line, regarding this we provided information on the legal background of service provision.

We also prepared updated membership maps for several EGTCs and sent an updated 2020 map of the Hungarian EGTC network to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. We compiled a source map for the BTC EGTC, peer-reviewed the anniversary volume of the Tisza EGTC and incorporated the Via Carpatia EGTC in two professional initiatives dealing with the management of small project funds. The Gate to Europe EGTC made an analysis on cross-border effects of COVID. We translated it into English and we promoted it at the EU level. We participated (due to the epidemiological situation many times in an online form) in several EGTC professional events (conferences, project development workshops), typically as speakers.

In our newsletters, we regularly reported on the current activities of Hungarian EGTCs, as well as on the domestic and European developments and policy processes affecting their operational conditions. Regarding the ongoing cross-border programming, we also requested the remarks of the relevant Hungarian EGTCs and informed them about the developments.

We started to develop the EGTC monitor in 2017 which is an information platform concerning European groupings of territorial cooperation with Hungarian interest. All important information is available on the platform – in Hungarian and in English – about the Hungarian EGTCs, the legal framework and policy context of their operation, thus ensuring the visibility of the results of the Hungarian EGTC network at European level.

We implement our institutional development activities without any extra charge.

Institutional development related events

Date	Location	Event
2020.03.10.	Brussels (online)	Consultation with the Task Force of the ECR EGTC
2020.06.08.	Budapest	EGTC workshop
2020.06.25.	Warsaw (online)	Participating in the Steering Committee of the ECR network
2020.07.30.	Kóspallag	EGTC workshop
2020.09.08.	Budapest	Consultation with the representatives of the Mura Region EGTC
2020.11.09.	Paris (online)	EGTC conference of the MOT – the Borders Forum
2020.11.25.	Miskolc	Presentation of the institutional development strategy of the Via Carpatia EGTC
2020.12.03.	Budapest	Digital Public Administration Summit 2020

CROSS-BORDER POLICY-MAKING

CESCI puts strong emphasis on the participation in Hungarian and EU level policy-making related to cross-border cooperation. In this field, our activity is very diversified, it ranges from the local level to the EU one.

Participation in European policy-making

Working group at EU level to deal with the impacts of the pandemic

In the spring of 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an almost hermetic closure of the EU's internal borders, which simultaneously hindered the enforcement of the four freedoms (free movement of people, goods, capital and services) previously considered to be major achievements of the EU, and the implementation of cross-border projects and programmes. The political climate has significantly changed, the issue of cross-border cooperation has become neglected. That is why the Legislative Directorate of the Committee of the Regions initiated the establishment of a small working group at the end of March, which, apart from the French Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the DG REGIO of the European Commission included CESCI, too. The working group held its online meetings every 2-3 weeks, and as a result, several initiatives were launched to revitalise border regions: a separate news platform dedicated to the developments in border regions was set up on the COVID-19 platform of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) (our association contributed to the platform with 2-3 news per week), and the CoR also collected stories on border closures through a survey (also promoted by CESCI); a citizens' consultation was launched on the future of cross-border cooperation (CESCI produced several language variants and we promoted the survey in Eastern Europe); and we continuously shared information about changing border regimes. The aim of the CoR consultation is to create a long-term vision by 2050.

European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance

One of the main achievements of the EU level working group is the establishment of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance on the initiative of the MOT and with the participation of the AEBR and CESCI; the aim is to preserve the cross-border integration achievements acquired over the last 30 years. The Committee of the Regions joined the initiative, as well as institutions and private individuals who consider that building of cross-border relationships is important. During the year, we constantly promoted the objectives of the alliance, we contributed to the preparation of different language versions of the founding declaration and promoted it in Central and Eastern Europe through our networks. The association created a policy action plan and summarised its opinion on borders addressing the new commissioner for regional policy.



Legal accessibility

In the last few years, we have actively been involved in the EU initiatives tackling still existing legal and administrative obstacles that hamper cross-border cooperation and mobility. We have made our voice heard in the EU discourses on the removal of cross-border legal barriers, cross-border institutionalised cooperation, funding rules and models for cross-border development. In 2020, this meant activities, such as participation at the events of the 18th European Week of Regions and Cities, organised at the 30th anniversary of the Interreg, or joining the European-level efforts to adapt to the new situation resulting from COVID-19. We also completed the questionnaire made by the European Commission in this topic and we encouraged others to do the same through our networks.

Involving financial instruments in the CBC programmes

We prepared a synthesis study on how external financial instruments can be involved in cross-border programmes. The study was based on the technical paper jointly prepared with the MOT at the request of the EIB in the previous year, as well as on the subsequently published EU documents.

European Week of Regions and Cities

The European Week of Regions and Cities, the largest annual event on regional policy in Brussels, was organised online this year due to the epidemiological situation. The emphasis was given to empowering citizens (between October 5-9), to cohesion and cooperation (between October 12-16), and to environmental protection (between October 19-22). The team members of CESCI participated at 20 workshops and we co-moderated one of them.



Cross-border public transport

As a member of a consortium, led by the German KCW, we submitted a bid for the tender published by the European Commission aiming at the exploration of cross-border public transport services and the identification of missing links. The tender was not successful.

Participation in Central European policy-making

SECCo2: Youth for cross-border partnership and cohesion of Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Strategies

In 2020, even after the project ended, we continued to update and promote the digital information platform established within the framework of our project (Sharing Expertise on Cross-Border Cooperation within the Danube Region) implemented with the support of the Danube Strategic Project Fund.

Interministerial Working Group of the Danube Region Strategy, PA10

We continued to be active and permanent participants of the Danube Region Strategy Interministerial Working Group coordinated by the Department for Water Diplomacy and the Danube Region Strategy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and through our professional background support, we actively helped represent the interests of cross-border cooperation in the activities related to PA10. In this respect we constantly participate in the work of the Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP), we prepared a professional proposal to support cross-border city-to-city cooperation and gave a presentation on the role of legal obstacles at the extended meeting of the PA 10 Steering Committee.

Legal accessibility between V4 countries

As a result of our 2018-2019 project, called Legal accessibility between V4 countries, we summarised the conditions and ways to develop a mechanism facilitating mobility, applicable to the Visegrad Four in a study and a guide. The study was delivered to the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Budapest and asked him to promote our efforts to establish the mechanism, which he gladly undertook. The first meeting would have taken place at the end of September in the presence of the ambassadors of the other two Visegrad countries and the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but this was hindered by the coronavirus pandemic. We attempt to continue this process in 2021.

With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders

In 2020, we put strong emphasis on Eastern (basically Ukrainian) and Balkan networking. Within the framework of this, an international consortium led by CESC submitted a tender to the Visegrád Fund, called 'With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders'. Besides CESC, the partnership includes the Institute of Economic and Legal Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Faculty of Law of the Uzhhorod National University, the Institute of Political Science of the University of Prešov, the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization Polish Academy of Sciences and the Technical University of Liberec. The tender received a favourable assessment. The goal of the project is to boost cross-border cooperation by improving its national (development of the legal framework), regional and local (capacity building) conditions. The kick-off conference of the project was held online on November 24, followed by the compilation of a policy document that was aimed to formulate proposals for the Ukrainian state authorities to develop a regulatory framework supporting cross-border activities of local and regional authorities, based on the experiences of the V4 countries.



Our further activities at macro-regional level

In the autumn of 2020, we submitted an unsuccessful bid together with our Italian (ISIG) and Serbian (CESCI Balkans) partners at the tender of the European Commission to procure a professional service for the EU integration of the Western Balkan with the assistance of the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy. At the same time, the knowledge acquired this way also enabled CESC to work as a member of a winning consortium in 2021 on the future of the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategies within the framework of the ESPON programme.

With the involvement of Slovak (including CESC Carpathia), Polish and Ukrainian partners, we applied for the Black Sea Trust fund call to expand the Košice Platform with experts from the Black Sea countries. Regarding the evaluation, no feedback was received until the end of 2020.

Participation in national level policy-making

Legal accessibility

Tasks like, unfolding the existing legal and administrative obstacles and making proposals on how to eliminate these obstacles play more and more significant role within our activities facilitating cooperation in border regions. With the support of the Ministry of Justice, we could implement our fifth project of this topic in 2020. This time, cooperation of ambulance services on both sides of the borders and the analysis of the legal environment of cross-border rescue represented the domestic aspect in the process. However, the epidemiological situation made it partially impossible to implement the relevant professional consultations and the implementation of this project element was postponed to 2021. Our aim is to support the territorial cooperation of emergency services with cross-border nature along the Hungarian-Austrian and the Hungarian-Slovak borders. Also within the framework of this project, we published a volume of studies on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the EGTC tool and a comprehensive report on the impact of the border closure due to the pandemic on border regimes, primarily focusing on legal aspects.

B-Solutions projects

The European Commission has commissioned the AEBR to launch an EU-wide project to help identify and propose solutions to legal and administrative barriers at internal borders. We already examined an obstacle in 2019, regarding the cross-border machine rental system of the Arrabona EGTC. The summary of this case study is included in the collection, published by the AEBR in 2020. In 2020, we were assigned to analyse further four obstacles along the Hungarian borders. The implementation of these analyses was shifted to 2021.

Cross-border accessibility in the Hungarian-Serbian border region

We successfully participated in the call of the Homokhátásgért Association, whose object was to analyse the Hungarian and Serbian legislations relating to cross-border trade of local products. With the involvement of CESC Balkans, we developed a study on the sale of these products across the border within the framework of the TASQ project.



Events related to policy-making

Date	Location	Events
2020.04.08.	Brussels (online)	The first meeting of the EU level epidemiological working group
2020.04.14.	Vienna (online)	Participation in the meeting of the EUSDR's Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP)
2020.04.22.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.05.06.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.05.19.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.05.28.	Zadar (online)	ESPON seminar on territorial development and green transition
2020.06.03.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.06.05.	Gronau (online)	Online forum of the AEBR called 'New borders, new opportunities'
2020.06.11.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.06.16.	Paris (online)	Preparatory meeting of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
2020.06.15-16.	Vienna (online)	Participation in the meeting of the EUSDR's Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP)
2020.06.18.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.06.29.	Paris (online)	Preparatory meeting of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
2020.07.02.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.07.07.	Vienna (online)	Meeting of the Danube Strategy PA10 Steering Committee discussing the policy document aiming to involve youth
2020.09.03.	Paris (online)	Preparatory-meeting of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
2020.09.04.	Budapest	Meeting of the EUSDR interministerial working group
2020.09.07.	Budapest	Consultation with the Czech ambassador about the V4 accessibility mechanism in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
2020.09.16.	Vienna (online)	The extended meeting of the Danube Strategy PA10 Steering Committee, presentation on the legal obstacles
2020.09.18.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.10.08.	Paris (online)	Preparatory meeting of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
2020.10.14.	Brussels (online)	Panel organised by the EU epidemiological working group at the European Week of Regions and Cities
2020.10.21.	Vienna (online)	7th Danube Participation Day
2020.11.18.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.11.24.	Lublin (online)	Kick-off online seminar of the project called 'With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders'
2020.12.08.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.12.17.	Berlin (online)	The AEBR B-Solutions project launch workshop

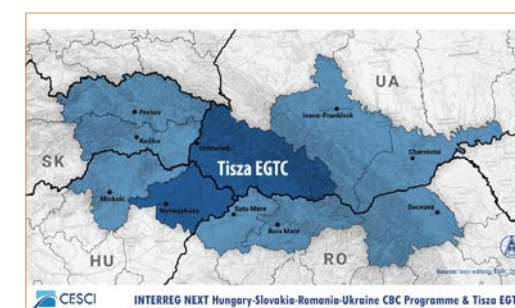
CROSS-BORDER KNOWLEDGE SHARING

We conduct comprehensive information and knowledge sharing activities (during which we also try to learn as much as we can), in order the local stakeholders to become more and more successful at developing cross-border cooperation.

Capacity development

Annual conference and the cross-border school of the AEBR

We participated in the 2020 general assembly and the annual conference of our important strategic partner, the Association of European Border Regions (our association is also a member of it), in online version. In connection with the event, the fourth Cross-Border School took place as well. On behalf of our association, Kitti Dubniczki, chief planner, gave a presentation at the conference on CESC's cross-border planning experiences, using the example of the Tisza EGTC.



Specialist training at the EDUTUS University

Ensuring the adequate human resources is a key pillar of strengthening the local EGTC network. To this end, a one-year-long cross-border development specialist training course, which can be completed besides of working launched at the EDUTUS University was developed with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and with the professional contribution of CESC. The main objective of the schooling is to train professionals, based on their previously acquired basic qualifications, who will gain special knowledge in cross-border developments which this could address the lack of specialists in EGTCs.

Information, knowledge transfer

Professional seminar of the Oradea Process

The Oradea Process is one of our activities to strengthen our relationships with neighbouring states. The Initiatives France-Europe Centrale et Orientale and CESC organised the professional event facilitating cooperation across the Hungarian-Romanian border for the sixth time. The topic of the workshop this year was the continuation of last year's event: cross-border integrated planning and development.

The advantages of cross-border cooperation relevant for the European project – 100 years after Trianon

The event, which was aimed at strengthening relationships with neighbouring states and was organised by CESCİ together with the French Embassy in Hungary, the French Institute in Budapest, the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière and the Initiatives France-Europe Centrale et Orientale, was held on 28 October 2020 and was called 'The advantages of cross-border cooperation relevant for the European project – 100 years after Trianon'. The aim of the online seminar was to focus on cooperation, like the reconciliation between Germany and France, instead of the border-related approaches that generate tensions between the neighbouring nations.

Borders Forum (Paris)

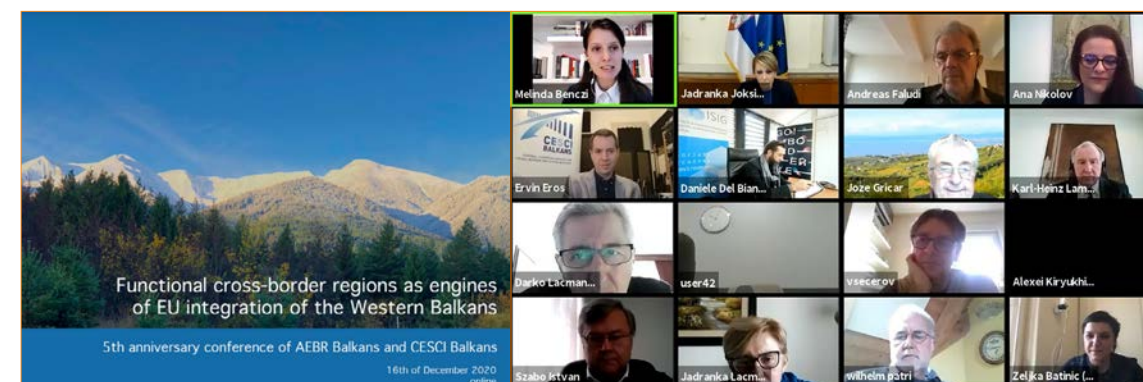
The Mission Transfrontalière Opérationnelle (MOT), the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions jointly organised the first Borders Forum in Paris on 9-10 November 2020. The aim of the conference was to provide a platform where local, national and European stakeholders across borders can discuss the day-to-day challenges, obstacles and projects in these European areas. At the online event, in which more than 700 people participated, at the request of CESCİ, dr. Judit Varga, Minister of Justice, represented the Hungarian position, and Zoltán Bara, Director of the Pons Danubii EGTC, shared the experiences of local actors. During the two-day-long forum, the book about the 15 years of EGTCs, published by CESCİ, was launched.



Conference celebrating the fifth anniversary of the cooperation of AEBR Balkans and CESCİ Balkans

The cooperation of AEBR Balkans and CESCİ Balkans had its fifth anniversary on 16 December 2020. In honour of the joint work so far, an online conference was organised with the active assistance and participation of CESCİ (Budapest) to meet with the European partners and to discuss the past, present and especially the future of cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans. The conference was moderated by one of the strategic planners of CESCİ, Melinda Benczi. The event called 'Functional cross-border regions as engines of the EU integration in the Western Balkans' touched upon topics such as the history of the AEBR and the CESCİ initiatives and cooperation, as well as professional conclusions on how functional regions and integrated, cross-border cooperation can be a useful instrument for building trust and capacity. Lecturers were leading experts on the subject, like professor Andreas Faludi and the founding director of the Spatial Foresight, Kai Böhme. Olivér Várhelyi, EU Commissioner for the enlargement and neighbourhood policy of the EU, greeted the participants in a video message.

Also with significant contribution and partial financial support of CESCİ, a joint celebratory study on the situation and opportunities of cross-border cooperation in the Balkans will be published.



Events related to knowledge sharing

Date	Location	Events
2020.02.06.	Budapest	Consultation at the EDUTUS University about the relaunch of the cross-border development specialist course
2020.05.12.	Lille (online)	INTERREG webinar on holding online events
2020.06.17.	Paris (online)	The first webinar on cross-border governance by the MOT
2020.06.26.	Novi Sad (online)	Consultation about the joint publication of AEBR and CESCİ Balkans
2020.08.06.	Budapest	Presentation on cross-border cooperation at the diplomat training academy
2020.10.06.	Bázakerettye	Presentation at the conference of the Mura Region EGTC: 'Why are local OP sources needed for cross-border cooperation?'
2020.10.05-22.	Brussels (online)	At the European Week of Regions and Cities, the co-workers of CESCİ participated in 20 workshops, and one of them was co-moderated by the Secretary-General of CESCİ
2020.10.28.	Budapest (online)	Online webinar called 'The advantages of cross-border cooperation relevant for the European project – 100 years after Trianon'
2020.11.04.	Eupen (online)	Presentation at the Cross-Border School of AEBR
2020.11.05-06.	Eupen (online)	Annual conference and general assembly of AEBR
2020.11.12.	Debrecen (online)	Oradea seminar
2020.11.26.	Vienna (online)	'Danube Energy+' introductory event
2020.12.16.	Novi Sad (online)	5th anniversary conference of CESCİ Balkans and AEBR Balkans

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